



## California Welcoming Task Force Groups Call on Biden Administration to End Title 42

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, March 18, 2022

PRESS CONTACT: Alex Mensing | [cawtfmedia@innovationlawlab.org](mailto:cawtfmedia@innovationlawlab.org) | (619) 432-6378

**San Diego, CA** — Monday, March 21, marks the two-year anniversary of the implementation of Title 42, a federal policy that effectively closed the border to families, adults and children fleeing violence and persecution and seeking asylum in the U.S. The Biden administration continues to illegally invoke this Trump-era policy to quickly expel people without an opportunity to seek asylum.

California Welcoming Task Force (CAWTF) member organizations that provide services to migrants on both sides of the border have witnessed the pain and chaos wrought by Title 42. Pregnant women have crossed and given birth in Customs and Border Protection (CBP) custody, only to be expelled back to Mexico with their U.S.-citizen newborn babies. Families whose lives have been threatened have been flown back to the very places they fled. Migrant shelters and humanitarian networks in Tijuana and Mexicali have been overwhelmed, leaving many families and individuals on the streets or in highly precarious and unsafe conditions because the Biden administration refuses to allow people to seek asylum.

Under the Trump administration, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) implemented Title 42 using the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext to keep people from seeking asylum. Title 42 is based on politics, not science. In fact, the CDC recently [announced](#) that unaccompanied minors are no longer subject to Title 42, showing that people seeking asylum can be safely processed. Over the last two years, numerous [public health experts and organizations](#) have [condemned](#) the policy as useless in fighting COVID-19, as well as cruel, inhumane and harmful. The CDC must end Title 42.

We join the growing chorus of voices calling for a complete end to Title 42 and for a more humane, efficient and just asylum system.

CAWTF member organizations speak out against Title 42 as the policy's two-year anniversary approaches:

**Margaret Cargioli, Directing Attorney, Immigrant Defenders Law Center:**

“Expelling asylum seekers to harm and hardship is unlawful and unfair especially during a pandemic when the most vulnerable need protection. Respecting the dignity of asylum seekers and saving their lives are moral imperatives.”

**Stephen Manning, Executive Director, Innovation Law Lab:**

“Title 42 was never about public health. Title 42 is about undermining due process, throwing the asylum system out the window and, ultimately, denying Black and brown migrants any opportunity to seek safety in the United States. There never has been and never will be a justification for the harm and cruelty wrought by this policy. It’s time to welcome people fleeing danger and give them an opportunity to seek asylum.”

**Kate Clark, senior director of immigration services for Jewish Family Service of San Diego (JFS):**

“Asylum seekers have a legal right to seek protection in the U.S., and yet for the last two years, asylum seekers from around the world have been unlawfully and forcibly expelled to unsafe conditions without any right to due process. The complete termination of Title 42 is long overdue and will be a key restoration of that right. For the entire COVID-19 pandemic, we have demonstrated that it is possible to both prioritize public health and welcome vulnerable individuals with dignity through our work as chief operator of the San Diego Rapid Response Network (SDRRN) Migrant Shelter Services. Once Title 42 ends, we know the number of asylum seekers processed into the U.S. will quickly increase, and we stand at the ready to coordinate with all levels of government and our partners to provide the resources and support needed to welcome people seeking asylum safely and expeditiously at our border.”

**Norma Chávez-Peterson, executive director of the ACLU of San Diego & Imperial Counties:**

“People fleeing persecution, violence and war have the legal and human right to seek asylum in the United States. The prior administration’s efforts to unlawfully dismantle our asylum system resulted in needless suffering. Trump-era policies that remain in effect today, most notably Title 42 and Remain in Mexico, perpetuate our government’s violation of people’s fundamental rights. It is a national disgrace and this Sunday marks a grim milestone.

“March 20, 2022 is the second anniversary of Title 42, a CDC public health order that uses the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to expel migrants seeking protection at the U.S. border. The increasing number of Ukrainians seeking refuge in the United States is only the latest group of people affected by the ill-conceived Title 42. We know they won't be the last, as long as these unjust policies remain in force.

“Whether unintentional or by design, Title 42 has had a disproportionate impact on Black, Latino and LGBTQ migrants. As an example, since September 2021, the Biden administration has expelled and deported more than 14,000 Haitians – many under Title 42.

“The Biden administration must end Title 42 and welcome all people seeking asylum with humanity and dignity. This is why we are joining with organizations across the country to demand that CDC Director Rochelle Walensky resist political interference and follow the science. It's time to end Title 42.”

**Pedro Rios, Director, US-Mexico Border Program, American Friends Service Committee:**

“The Biden Administration continues to implement Title 42 which causes immeasurable suffering for migrants when it denies them the right to make an asylum claim. The Biden Administration must dismantle Title 42, purposefully implemented as a racist and harmful policy under the Trump presidency, and recommit the United States to respecting its legal obligations under US law and international agreements to protect the most vulnerable.”

**Dulce Garcia, Executive Director, Border Angels:**

“Title 42 is a dangerous policy with terrible repercussions that we witness every day. Shelters at capacity and the rising death toll of black and brown migrants at our southern border are happening under the guise of public health. We cannot continue to traumatize these communities further. This policy doesn't protect; it harms migrants with a rightful claim to asylum whose lives are not disposable. Rather than continue to use resources to expel migrants back to danger, the U.S. should welcome migrants with dignity.”

**Josiane Moukam, Organizer of the African Community, Espacio Migrante:**

“Several community members have been found by their attackers, others are living on the street without resources to survive, a situation that has affected the health of people while they wait, sleeping in the cold. This causes desperation to grow among

migrant people stuck in an endless wait, not knowing when the process will have a favorable response. Many of these people are honest people who just need protection. A month ago, a Honduran family had to leave the shelter where they were due to lack of food and danger. In addition there is the case of a Haitian family that was threatened with a weapon by the two Chilean adults who sexually abused their 12-year-old daughter, who currently live here in Tijuana after fleeing Chile.”

**Katerine Giron, Lead Community Organizer, Espacio Migrante:**

“Asylum seekers experience family separation under MPP, because as adults they must have a different immigration judge and separate cases, even though they left for the same reason. MPP is a policy that never should have been implemented and it is even more important it not be reimplemented, since the people who were in that program were exposed to many dangers in the cities where they were returned to, such as: robbery, extortion, rape, kidnapping, and even death. No more MPP!”

**Donna Duvin, Executive Director, San Diego International Rescue Committee (IRC):**

“Title 42 makes U.S. territory unreachable to families and individuals fleeing countries of origin in search of safety and protection. This policy actively returns individuals that are exercising their human right to seek asylum to dangerous situations including kidnapping, extortion and assault. Rather than welcoming with dignity, asylum seekers’ rights continue to be violated by the U.S. On the second anniversary of this harmful policy we urge the Administration to immediately revoke Title 42 and restore access to asylum for any and all individuals seeking protection.”

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The **California Welcoming Task Force** is a binational coalition dedicated to re-envisioning how the U.S. can welcome people seeking asylum safely and expeditiously at our border by coordinating across sectors (humanitarian & health,, legal, advocacy and communications). More info at [www.rapidresponsesd.org/cawtf](http://www.rapidresponsesd.org/cawtf)